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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine how recent elementary education graduates and their principals perceive, in terms of competencies, preparation for teaching. A poll was taken of a group of teachers in their first year of teaching in elementary schools. Their principals were asked to respond to a similar poll. The study was designed to provide answers to the following questions: (1) How do recent graduates of an elementary education program perceive their undergraduate preparation for teaching? (2) How do elementary school principals perceive the undergraduate preparation of their teachers? (3) Do principals and teachers perceive undergraduate preparation for teaching in the same manner? The results seem to indicate that principals and teachers view the preparation for teaching in a different manner. Principals do not perceive the various components of preparing teachers, but rather view teacher education in its totality. Teachers view their preparation as being composed of several major elements and view their teaching programs as being somewhat more effective in preparing them to teach than did the principals. While both teachers and principals gave approval to undergraduate preparation, there were indications that program improvement is needed. (JD)

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The Relationships Between Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of The Quality of College Preparation For Teaching Competence

Ronald Goldenberg

Introduction

The preparation of teachers is changing. Regardless of the arguments pro and con,[1] the adoption of competency-based teacher education is becoming widespread, and the list of institutions joining these ranks is still growing.

Competency-based programs for teacher preparation represent a departure from previous programs which have tended to focus primarily upon knowledge and skill mastery in classroom settings. The newer conceptualization of teacher preparation focuses upon the demonstration of teaching competence. Competency-based teacher preparation is based in a laboratory or field-centered program in the schools rather than in a university classroom. In this way, it becomes functionally integrated with the profession.

In the past, few attempts have been made to justify the existence of schools of education in terms of what they have done to prepare teachers and what these teachers were able to do after they left the college program. Spanjer[2] supports this notion by indicating that the issue of accountability and the definition of what schools of education are about are in one way or another wrapped up in the goals of competency-based teacher education.

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[1]Houston, W. R. and Howsam, R. B., "CBTE: The Ayes of Texas" and Sandoz, E., "CBTE: The Nays of Texas," Kappan, Vol. LV, No. 5, (January, 1974).

[2]Spanjer, R. A., "Fizzle, Frazzle or Future: The National Scene," paper presented at Conference on Professional Laboratory Experiences, January, 1974.

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The notion that there is any correlation between an education degree or a teaching certificate and one's ability to teach effectively is highly questionable.[3] Therefore, the burden of proof that a person has the qualifications to teach rests primarily upon us -- the teacher educators.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine how recent elementary education graduates and their principals perceived, in terms of competencies, preparation for teaching. Although Flanders[4] considers CBTE thus far as having a weak research base, there is an increasing amount of systematic evaluation taking place in competency-based teacher education programs. Since evaluation is a necessary ingredient of any program preparing teachers, it is increasingly appropriate that studies of this nature be designed and executed in order to determine program effectiveness and future goals. This study was designed to gather evidence to provide answers to the following questions:

1. How do elementary school principals perceive the undergraduate preparation of their teachers?
2. How do recent graduates of an elementary education program perceive their undergraduate preparation for teaching?
3. Do principals and teachers perceive undergraduate preparation for teaching in the same manner?

Method

All recent elementary education graduates were polled to determine whether or not they had accepted a teaching position. The 136 teachers

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[3]"Drive to Upgrade Teaching - Why All The Resistence" U.S. News and World Report. Vol. LXXXVII, No. 11, (September 9, 1974).

[4]Flanders, N. A., "The Changing Base of Performance-Based Teaching," Kappan, Vol. LV, No. 5, (January, 1974).

identified in the poll received a letter explaining the purpose of the study and an instrument designed to obtain their perceptions of undergraduate preparation for teaching. In addition, their principals (N=134) (there were two principals each of whom employed two teachers participating in the study) received a letter explaining the study and the identical scale. Instruments were completed and returned by 118 principals (88.06%) and by 94 teachers (69.11%). This high percentage of return is thought to be attributed to the interest the Ss had in evaluating a teacher education program.

The teacher respondents had taken part in some pre-student teaching field-based experiences as part of their preparation. All of them were in their first year of teaching and were fairly evenly distributed in terms of grade level taught: 47 percent were teaching in the primary grades (1-3) and 45 percent were teaching in the upper elementary grades (4-7). The remaining eight percent of the total teacher sample were employed to teach pre-school or kindergarten children.

Instrumentation

At one major university, there are two elementary education programs operating concurrently. The first, and older program, is largely based in university classrooms supplemented with up to three partial quarters of field-based laboratory experiences. The second and newer program is a Competency-Based Teacher Education Program. At the time of this study, there were approximately 140 students at various levels of preparation enrolled in CBTE.

The instrument designed for use in this research was composed of fifteen statements representing areas of competence for an elementary school

teacher. These statements had been developed through months of collaborative efforts among public school personnel, the students involved in the CBTE program, and university faculty. The statements reflect the areas of competence which form the basis of the elementary CBTE program.

The investigator employed a six-point Likert-type scale for each item (1 - "Poor" to 6 - "Outstanding") to which participants were asked to respond in terms of how they perceived the undergraduate teacher preparation program.

Validity

Content validity of the instrument employed in the study was assured because it reflected the judgments of public school personnel, college students and faculty. The statements were judged as being representative and worthy of being components of an elementary CBTE program.

Reliability

Reliability of the instrument was determined by examination of the h^2 columns in Tables I and III. Inspection of this column in Table I revealed a minimum value of .628 ($p < .01$, df=62). The h^2 column in Table III revealed a minimum value of .529 ($p < .01$, df=62). As the reliability of a measure is always greater than or equal to its communality (h^2)[5], and because of the significant h^2 value, it can be seen that the reliability of the items was relatively high.

A computer program by Armor and Couch[6] was used to factor analyze both the principals' and teachers' responses to the instrument. The analysis was made by the principal components solution with unities in the diagonal.

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[5] Kerlinger, Fred N., Foundations of Behavioral Research, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.

[6] Armor, David J. and Couch, Arthur S., Data Text Primer, New York: Free Press, 1972.

Only one factor based upon the elementary principals' responses satisfied Kaiser's criterion of roots greater than one. Four factors satisfied Kaiser's criterion of roots greater than one for the teachers' responses. These factors were rotated by the orthogonal varimax procedure.

Factor loadings for the principals' responses are found in Table I.

TABLE I

Factor Analysis of Principal's Responses

Item	I	II	h^2
1. Determines needs of learners	.784	-.152	.637
2. Plans activities for learners	.763	.325	.687
3. Selects appropriate materials for instruction	.848	.007	.719
4. Employs variety of teaching strategies appropriate to situation	.805	.312	.745
5. Maintains environment conducive to learning	.819	.197	.710
6. Utilizes control procedures appropriate to situation	.749	.258	.628
7. Employs variety of evaluative procedures appropriate to situation	.792	.040	.629
8. Evaluates effectiveness of instructional program	.733	.376	.678
9. Performs necessary administrative and technical activities	.760	.391	.731
10. Communicates effectively with others	.860	.143	.670
11. Works cooperatively with others	.809	.370	.790
12. Demonstrates responsible behavior	.857	.252	.798
13. Utilizes feedback to improve professional competence	.823	.089	.685
14. Demonstrates ethical behavior	.815	.262	.733
15. Accounts for fulfilling institutional goals	.813	.006	.661

An examination of the factor matrix computed from the principals' responses was made in order to obtain answers to the first question: "How do elementary school principals perceive the undergraduate preparation of teachers?". Table I reveals that the principals' responses to the instrument yielded only one factor. The minimum correlation value extracted in the first factor matrix is .733 indicating the very high loadings on the one factor.

The principal components (axis) factor loadings were reported in this study because it is known to extract a maximum amount of variance as each factor is calculated. This method results in an expression of the smallest number of factors. Inspection of the eigen roots also supports the notion of a one factor solution. Kaiser's criterion of roots greater than one was followed. Only one eigen root satisfied this criterion. The size of Factor I root (9.579) as compared to Factor II root (0.924) also helped make this determination.

From these data it is apparent that the principals viewed the instrument as a global scale in regard to evaluation of teacher preparation rather than one which discriminates among the various components of a teacher training program.

Table II presents the respondents' means for each of the 15 items and the mean for the total instrument. Using a Likert-type scale with gradations of 1-6, the theoretical mean for each item and the total instrument would be 3.5. It would appear then, that the principals view their teachers' preparation only slightly better than average.

TABLE II

Item Means For Principals' and Teachers' Responses

	Item	Mean	
		Principals	Teachers
1.	Determine needs of learners	4.032	4.266
2.	Plans activities for learners	4.281	4.313
3.	Selects appropriate materials for instruction	4.047	4.281
4.	Employs variety of teaching strategies appropriate to situation	4.125	4.190
5.	Maintains environment conducive to learning	4.203	4.375
6.	Utilizes control procedures appropriate to situation	4.047	3.844
7.	Employs variety of evaluative procedures appropriate to situation	3.781	4.047
8.	Evaluates effectiveness of instructional program	3.784	4.188
9.	Performs necessary administrative and technical activities	4.156	4.047
10.	Communicates effectively with others	4.357	4.823
11.	Works cooperatively with others	4.484	5.063
12.	Demonstrates responsible behavior	4.641	5.016
13.	Utilizes feedback to improve professional competence	4.109	4.750
14.	Demonstrates ethical behavior	4.734	4.952
15.	Accounts for fulfilling institutional goals	4.238	4.531
		$\bar{X}$=4.201	$\bar{X}$=4.446

In order to obtain an answer to the second question, "How do recent graduates of an elementary education program perceive their undergraduate program for teaching?" an examination of the teacher data from the factor analysis was made. Factor loadings for the responses of teachers to the instrument are in Table III. An examination of the eigen roots led to accepting a four factor solution.

Factor I is identified as Instructional Procedures and is based upon significant loadings on items describing how the teachers perceive their preparation for day to day contact with children in the classroom. In regard to this instructional component, items #1 and #8, seem to share some communality with Factors III and IV. This suggests that teachers perceive determining the needs of learners and evaluating the effectiveness of instruction as being related to the factors of Instructional Planning and Professional Behavior. This relationship is logical and would be expected.

Factor II, On-the-Job Relationships, is a relatively pure factor with high loadings on those items which represent competencies or skills teachers perceived to be related to interpersonal relationships in terms of their colleagues and their superiors. Item #9 in this factor was the exception. Performing necessary administrative and technical duties was seen by the teachers as also being related to Instructional Procedures and Instructional Planning. This again was considered to be a logical relationship.

Factor III, Instructional Planning is a distinguishable factor with items having to do with competencies and skills that the teachers saw as being necessary to effective teaching and directly relating to the children's learning. Item #4 in this factor was seen by the teachers as also being somewhat related to the factor of Professional Behavior.

While Factor IV, Professional Behavior, appears to be a distinguishable factor, it does not appear to be as pure as the others.

TABLE III

Rotated Factor Loadings For Teacher Respondents*

Item No.	Item	I	II	III	IV	h^2
	Factor I: Instructional Procedures					
1.	Determines needs of learners	.676		.332	.319	.670
5.	Maintains environment conducive to learning	.619				.529
6.	Utilizes control procedures appropriate to situation	.800				.694
7.	Employs variety of evaluative procedures appropriate to situation	.737				.647
8.	Evaluates effectiveness of instructional program	.585		.371	.314	.621
	Factor II: On-The-Job Relationships					
9.	Performs necessary administrative and and technical activities	.382	.535	.337		.550
10.	Communicates effectively with others		.781			.722
11.	Works cooperatively with others		.839			.766
12.	Demonstrates responsible behavior		.823			.799
	Factor III: Instructional Planning					
2.	Plans activities for learners			.800		.727
3.	Selects appropriate materials for instruction			.877		.808
4.	Employs variety of teaching strategies appropriate to situation			.655	.307	.648
	Factor IV: Professional Behavior					
13.	Utilizes feedback to improve professional competence		.403		.467	.531
14.	Demonstrates ethical behavior		.379		.748	.726
15.	Accounts for fulfilling institutional goals	.312			.773	.742

*Factor loadings below the value of .300 are not reported.

This is due to the fact that while each of the items loads heavily on this factor, they also load on one or more other factors. In addition, item #13 loaded almost equally on Factor II, On-the-Job-Relationships. There is a strong possibility that this item is perceived by the teachers as being a somewhat general competency.

The means for the teachers' responses for each of the 15 items and the teacher mean for the instrument can be found in Table II.

When an analysis was made of the means of the items by factor loadings, Table IV, it was found that the teachers perceived their preparation as being the weakest in regard to Factors I and II, Instructional Procedures, and On-the-Job-Relationships. Undergraduate preparation is perceived as being best in Factor IV, Professional Behavior. Overall, it was apparent that the teachers approved of their preparation, however, the strength of that approval is not encouraging in light of the measures taken by the institution to inaugurate program reform.

In attempting to answer the question "Do principals and teachers perceive undergraduate preparation for teaching in the same manner?", an examination of the factor matrix for both the principals and the teachers as well as inspection of item means and the means for the total instrument was made. The factor matrix for the principals revealed that they seemingly view their teachers' preparation in a global manner, rather than by components as the items suggest.

The teachers on the other hand perceived their preparation as falling into four major factors: I) Instructional Procedures; II) On-The-Job-Relationships; III) Instructional Planning; and, IV) Professional Behavior. Based upon factor loadings it is evident that the two groups viewed undergraduate preparation for teaching differently.

TABLE IV

Item and Factor Means

Item No.	Item	Mean
	Factor I: Instructional Procedures	
1.	Determines needs of learners	4.266
5.	Employs variety of teaching strategies appropriate to situation	4.375
6.	Utilizes control procedures appropriate to situation	3.844
7.	Employs variety of evaluative procedures appropriate to situation	4.047
8.	Evaluates effectiveness of instructional program	4.188
		$\bar{X}$=4.144
	Factor II: On-The-Job-Relationships	
9.	Performs necessary administrative and technical activities	4.047
10.	Communicates effectively with others	4.823
11.	Works cooperatively with others	5.063
12.	Demonstrates responsible behavior	5.016
		$\bar{X}$=4.737
	Factor III: Instructional Planning	
2.	Plans activities for learners	4.313
3.	Selects appropriate materials for instruction	4.281
4.	Employs variety of teaching strategies appropriate to situation	4.190
		$\bar{X}$=4.261
	Factor IV: Professional Behavior	
13.	Utilizes feedback to improve professional competence	4.750
14.	Demonstrates ethical behavior	4.952
15.	Accounts for fulfilling institutional goals	4.531
		$\bar{X}$=4.744

The teachers' perceptions were seemingly influenced by the fact that they had been involved in the program, and through this involvement could identify the different components which comprised their preparation. Additionally, they seemed to be able to determine which components helped and which did not help in preparing them for teaching. The teachers' responses to the instrument indicated that they were viewing the preparation process rather than the end-product as did the principals. It was evident from the analysis of data that principals did not see the relationship between teacher preparation and teacher effectiveness. Mainly, they viewed only the product of teacher preparation.

The principals and teachers did not differ greatly in their overall view of how well the program accomplished its purpose of helping teachers become prepared to teach. The teachers rated the program only slightly better than did their principals.

T tests of significant differences between means were not used to examine the differences between principals' and teachers' responses in respect to each item because of the obvious differences in the way each group interpreted the scale. However, inspection of the item means did reveal some differences between principals and teachers in their perceptions of preparation for teaching. The teachers, for example, perceived their preparation in control procedures (Item #6) as being the weakest of all. The fact that principals rated the teachers' preparation in this area higher than did the teachers themselves is not surprising in light of how the principals perceived the scale and how teachers generally feel about their abilities to exercise control over their students. Principals' perceptions of the weakest preparation was in the area of utilizing evaluation procedures (Item #7). Teachers also rated this item low.

The items that the teachers rated the highest were working with others and demonstrating responsible behavior (Items #11 and #12). Interestingly enough, these may be areas where the preparation program had questionable influence due to the fact that the teachers may have possessed these competencies prior to entering the professional sequence in their undergraduate preparation.

Summary and Conclusions

The results of this study would seem to indicate that principals and their teachers view the preparation for teaching in a different manner. As mentioned earlier, it would appear that the principals take a more global view of teacher preparation and are more prone to view the product of an undergraduate teacher education program rather than the program itself. In other words, the principals do not perceive the various components of preparing teachers, but rather view teacher education in its totality. It is also a strong possibility that the principals really did not know their teachers.

On the other hand, the teachers viewed their preparation as being composed of several major elements. This is no doubt due to the fact that they were directly involved in the processes comprising their preparation.

In addition, when instrument means were compared as to their views concerning preparation for teaching, the groups differed only slightly in that the teachers viewed the program as being somewhat more effective in preparing them to teach than did the principals. This, again, is felt to be due in part of the teachers' involvement in the program, and the fact that the principals were not actually familiar with their teachers' effectiveness. While both the teachers and principals give approval to

undergraduate preparation, there are clear indications program improvement is needed.

This study unquestionably bears out that information obtained from teachers in regard to their undergraduate preparation is by far the most desirable feedback. Teacher education institutions can then make use of this information to form the bases for making decisions in regard to increasing program effectiveness.

Several questions are raised as a result of this study. For example, what is an appropriate level of program approval shown by teachers? By principals? Should we be satisfied with the level of approval shown in this study? If program revision and change are taking place to improve the preparations of teachers, should the teachers' perceptions show approval of that program at the "5", "5+", or even "6" level on the scale? What is the teacher education institution doing (or not doing) to get teachers prepared at this level? It could be that CBTE can provide the answers.

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APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle the number which best describes your views concerning undergraduate preparation for teaching.	OUTSTANDING					POOR
1. Determines the needs of learners	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. Plans activities for learners	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. Selects appropriate materials for instruction	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. Employs a variety of teaching strategies appropriate to the situation	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. Maintains an environment conducive to learning	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. Utilizes control procedures appropriate to the situation	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. Employs a variety of evaluative procedures appropriate to the situation	6	5	4	3	2	1
8. Evaluates the effectiveness of the instructional program	6	5	4	3	2	1
9. Performs necessary administrative and technical activities	6	5	4	3	2	1
10. Communicates effectively with others	6	5	4	3	2	1
11. Works cooperatively with others	6	5	4	3	2	1
12. Demonstrates responsible behavior	6	5	4	3	2	1
13. Utilizes feedback to improve professional competence	6	5	4	3	2	1
14. Demonstrates ethical behavior	6	5	4	3	2	1
15. Accounts for fulfilling institutional goals	6	5	4	3	2	1